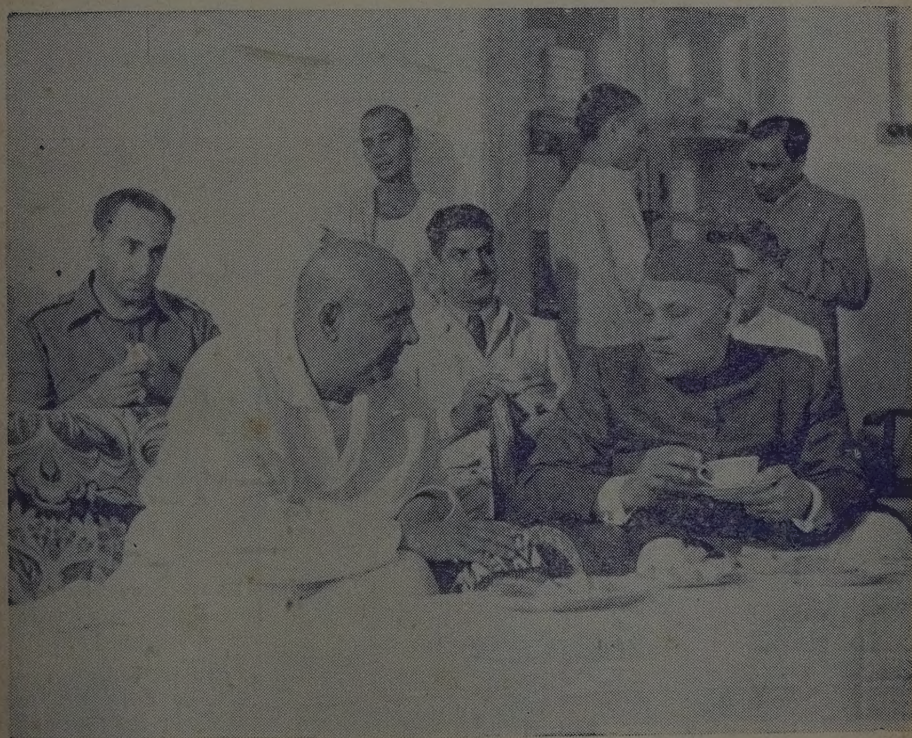


The Divine Life

Monthly Journal of The Divine Life Society



December
1956

*The Governor of Punjab Sri C.P.N. Singh with Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj
at a reception held at Sivanandanagar sometime ago.*

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3rd
1st December 1956.

Sr. Sivananda Margaretta
Geneva.

Neither art, nor science, nor
erudition is necessary to approach
God or realise Him. What is wanted
is a pure heart with love and
devotion to God, a heart resolutely
determined to apply itself to Him
alone, for His sake alone and
to love Him alone.

The foundation of spiritual
life is absolute faith in God.
This will draw soon great
grace from God,

May Lord bless you,
Om Tat Sat, Sivananda

RELIGIOUS CALENDAR

(15th December 1956 to
14th January 1957)

December

- 15 Pradosha Puja
- 17 Dattatreya Jayanti;
Purnima
- 24 Christmas Eve
- 27 Ekadasi
- 28 Thirty-fifth All-India
Yoga-Vedanta Con-
ference commences
- 29 Twenty-third Session
of All-World Reli-
gions Federations;
Pradosha Puja
- 30 Eighteenth Session
of All-World Sadhus
Federation
- 31 Thirteenth Founda-
tion Anniversary of
the Viswanath Mandir;
Amavasya

January

- 12 Ekadasi
- 13 Makarasankranti;
Uttarayana Punyakala;
Pradosha Puja
- Special Lakshmi and
Ganga Puja on every
Friday; feeding of dari-
dranarayanas on the last
day of every month.



THE DIVINE LIFE

Volume Eighteen

December, 1956

Number Twelve

A Collection of Prayers

HINDUISM

In the beginning of creation there was one God, the source of all lights. He was the only Lord of all created beings. He upholds both the earth and heaven. To Him we offer our prayers.

He is the giver of spiritual knowledge. He is the giver of strength. Him all the world worships and by His command all wise men obey. His shelter is immortality. His shadow is death. To Him we shall offer our prayers.

His own greatness has made Him the one sole king of all movable and immovable world. He is the Creator and Lord of all men and beasts. It is to that Lord we shall offer our prayers.

To Thee, O dispeller of all darkness, we offer our prayers with our minds and approach Thee every day, by day and by night.

Let us meditate on the excellent glory of that Divine Being who illumines everything. May He guide our understanding.

(Rig Veda)

O Thou Glorious Lord, O Protector of vows, I am determined to master my lower self. Bestow on me the required strength

and make my effort fruitful. Through Thy grace, leaving untruth, may I realize the Truth.

I worship Thee, O sweet Lord of transcendental vision, O giver of prosperity to all ! May I be free from the bonds of death, like the ripe fruit falling from the tree. May I never again forget my immortal nature.

O Lord ! Who blesses all creatures by revealing the Vedas, deign to make us happy by Thy calm and blissful Self, which roots out terror as well as sin.

Salutations to Thee ! O Destroyer of the cycle of births and deaths. O Lord of the universe, adorations to Thee.

O Lord ! Thou art beyond the sea of Samsara. Thou existeth in its midst also. Thou enableth one to go beyond sin by means of the sacred Mantras. Thou taketh one beyond death through knowledge. I bow to Thee. Thou art present in sacred flowing streams as well as on the coastland. Thou art in the tender grass on the seashore as well as in the foaming waves ; I bow to Thee.

May I be able to look upon all creatures with the eye of a friend. May we look

upon one another with the eye of a friend.

O Lord ! Thou art infinite energy. Do Thou fill me with energy. Thou art infinite virility. Do Thou fill me with virility. Thou art infinite strength. Do Thou bestow on me great strength. Thou art infinite power. Do Thou grant us power. Thou art infinite courage. Do Thou make me courageous. Thou art infinite fortitude. Do Thou fill me with fortitude.

O Lord ! Thou art our father. Do Thou instruct us like a father. Our prostrations unto Thee. Do not forsake us. Do Thou protect us for ever.

Whatever sins have been committed by me, in thought, word, or deed, may the Supreme Lord, the source of all strength, wisdom and purity, forgive me and purify me of them all.

May my body become pure. May I be free from impurity and sin. May I realize myself as the light divine. May my mind become ever pure. May my self become pure. May I realize myself as the light divine.

May we meet together, talk together ; let our minds apprehend alike ; common be our prayer ; common be our assembly's aim ; common be our purpose ; common be our desires ; united be our hearts ; united be our intention, so that there may be a thorough union among all of us. May our Father grant this.

(*Yajur Veda*)

Let us meditate on the glory and splendour of that Supreme Being, who illumines everything. May He guide us in all our actions. May He grant us a clear understanding and a pure intellect.

Let there be peace in heaven ; let there be peace in the atmosphere ; may peace fill the four quarters ; may the waters and medicinal herbs bring peace ; may planets give peace to all beings ; may all enlight-

ened persons disseminate peace to all beings ; may the Vedas spread peace everywhere ; may all other objects everywhere give us peace ; and may that peace come to us and remain with us for ever.

(*Yajur Veda*.)

JUDAISM

Hear, O Israel,* the Lord is One. The Lord is our God.

May it be Thy Will, O Lord and God of our fathers, to make us walk in Thy law and stick to Thy commandments ; and lead us away from sin, transgression, temptation and hatred. Remove from us every evil desire and make us adhere to the good.

O Lord, bestow on us Thy grace, favour and mercy in Thy sight and in the sight of all that behold us ; and grant gracious favours on us at all times. Glory unto Thee, O Lord, who bestoweth gracious favours on Thy people Israel. Amen.

Lead me, O Lord, in Thy righteousness. Make Thy Way straight before my face. Cleanse Thou me from secret faults. Keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sins ; let them not have dominion over me. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me ; and lead me in the Way Everlasting.

Show me Thy Ways, O Lord ! Teach me Thy Paths ; and lead me in Thy Truth ; Thou art the God of my Salvation. Open Thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law. Quicken Thou me according to Thy Word. Remove from me the way of lying.

*Israel means those who righteously tread the path of God, and His laws

JAINISM

Salutations to the Lord, the Destroyer of enemies, the Supreme Ruler, the King of those who have attained success.

Look with a steady gaze with affection the Lord of the winners, adore the adept in all your actions. Salutations to the Master of him who has reached the other shore of immortality, to the Highest of great eminence, to Him who is above destruction, to Him without any defect. Salutations unto Him who is free from old age, the Immortal the Wonderful, the Immeasurable Treasure.

Adoration to the Perfect Lord, full of sweetness. I worship His feet with my head with great zeal and enthusiasm, I ever salute Him with folded hands. Salutations to Thee, the Adept, the Illumined, the Good amongst all people in the world, the Shining One, the Joy of all eyes. Salutations to the Chief of all Devas and Asuras and the Great, who serve Him day and night. Adoration to Thee, the Tirthankara, the Bestower of Bliss, the Teacher, the Brother who serves without any motive. I adore Thee who longeth for the good of the world, entangled and those who take refuge in Thee, who art the Ocean of the waters of mercy. Salutations to Thee, who art seen in the glass of knowledge, whose nature is both light and darkness. Salutations to Thee who removeth the taints of all sins and misery, and who driveth away all sense of harassment. Adoration to Thee who art meditated upon by the world as the World Teacher, the Joy of the world, the Lord of the world and of its people. Salutations to Thee who help us to cross the terrible and endless ocean of worldly life, the guide on the way to the City of Bliss. Salutations to Thee, the refuge of the refugeless, unattached, beyond all limitations, formless, the Lord of the world. Salutations to Thee, the Enlightener of the meek, the matchless, the Lord

of mercy and charity, the pure, the Highest knowledge and the Ruler of the Devas.

ZOROASTRIANISM

Blessed indeed was the thought, blessed the world and blessed the deed of the Holy Zarathushtra. The celestial Spirits carried forth the scriptures. Glory to you, O Holy Scriptures !

Saluting Thee, O Mazda, we desire Thy gift of gracious help. We stretch our hands unto Thee and pray for the grace of Thy bountiful spiritual spirit. We beg of Thee that our actions unto all may be done in the spirit of righteousness and virtue ; and with this we may do reverence to the Soul of the Kine.

We remember the Holy Ahunavad Gatha reverentially. He is the Chief of Purity. We reverentially remember His prayer.

We adore the Ha called Yashkaothnem.

We worship the Holy Ahunavad Gatha who is the Lord of Purity. We worship the holy prayer of Ahunavad Gatha. We glorify such men and women whom Ahura Mazda recognizes as great in worship and purity.

Purity is the best gift. Happiness is to him who is pure for the sake of purity.

Fix we our minds in worship on the Lord, of Right and Might, of Wisdom and of Power, who gives us Conscience to do godly deeds. And also gives detachment from the world, and patient resignation whence we gain solace in time of weakness and of pain.

Grant me long life, Lord Mazda, fortitude and the right mind ; and show me the Straight Path, over which Thou broodest, and which leads to Thee. Lord, give me such a mind as makes men wise and dutiful ; the wealth of rectitude, from which all other wealth flows of itself, and conscience just, and patient fortitude, and right acti-

vity, bestow on me. Come unto me, O great Mazda, with Thy hands full of those duties, righteous words and deeds, which bring spirituality, detached aloofness from the world, and salvation thence.

Right thoughts, right words and right deeds—by these we gain Knowledge of Mazda, and thence of Brahm; the straight Path that the loving Lord Soshyant gave us—may we never err from it.

May this my mind, Lord Mazda, show to me the Truth, Thy inmost Spirit, greatest Good, ideal of ideals, to guide me aright in ways of Righteousness always. Having achieved that goal I will have gained all lesser things, to which my soul inclines.

BUDDHISM

Glory be to the Lord, the Holy Being, perfect in knowledge; glory be to the Lord, the Holy Being, perfect in knowledge; glory be to the Lord, the Holy Being, perfect in knowledge.

I go to the Buddha (Enlightened) for refuge; I go to the Law for refuge; I go to the Brotherhood for refuge.

For the second time, I go to the Buddha for refuge; for the second time, I go to the Law for refuge; for the second time, I go to the Brotherhood for refuge.

For the third time, I go to the Buddha for refuge; for the third time, I go to the Law for refuge; for the third time, I go to the Brotherhood for refuge.

I promise to abstain from taking the life of any living creature. I promise to abstain from taking anything with thievish intention. I promise to abstain from the evil indulgence of bodily passions. I promise to abstain from falsehood; I promise to abstain from any intoxicating liquor or drug.

CHRISTIANITY

O Almighty Lord, unto Thee all hearts are open. Unto Thee all desires are known and from Thee nothing is hidden; make pure the thoughts of ours by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly and wholeheartedly love Thee, and duly glorify Thy Holy Name. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Lord Christ! We, Thy obedient faithful and humble servants, dedicate this new-born day to Thee, praying that it may shine in Thy service as a pure gem in the chaplet of our life. O Thou Great King of love and mercy, Thee we adore and revere ever and for ever. Amen.

To the Most Holy and Adorable Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—three persons in one God; to Christ, our only Lord and Guide, the Prince of Peace; to the seven mighty spirits before the throne; and to the religious assemblage of just men who have attained perfection, the saints, the holy ones, be unceasing prayer from every living creature; and honour and glory for ever. Amen.

Teach us, O Lord, to see Thy life in all men and in all creatures of Thine earth and guide our nation through its leaders to preserve Thy peace, that the menace of war be far from our country. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The peace of God passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His son, Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God, Almighty the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you, and remain with you always. Amen.

ISLAM

In the name of the Lord, the Kind, the Compassionate. All honour be to God, Lord of all the worlds. The Kind and the Compassionate, the King on the day of

Sweet Lord! Let me be free from the clutches of birth and death. Let me be able to look upon all beings with equal vision. Let me be free from impurity and sin. Give me strength to control the mind. Give me strength to serve Thee and the humanity untiringly. Make me Thy fit instrument for Thy work. Make me pure and strong.

I bow to Thee, O indweller of all hearts. O Secret of secrets! Remove my weaknesses, defects and evil thoughts. Make me pure so that I may be able to receive Thy grace and blessings. O Lord! Thou art the thread-soul that connects all beings. Thou pervadest all, permeatest and interpenetratest all that exists in this universe.

Thou art Light Divine. Thou art the dispeller of ignorance. Thou art the All-merciful Lord. Give me a life without disease. Let me remember Thee always. Let me develop all the sublime virtues.

Thou art self-luminous. Thou art my father, mother, brother, friend, relative and guide. Let me realize the Truth. Let me be free from greed, lust, egoism, jealousy and hatred. Prepare me as Thy sweet messenger on this earth so that I may radiate joy, peace and bliss to the whole world. Let me utilize my body, mind and senses in Thy service and in the service of Thy creatures. Breathe into me Thy breath of Immortality. Let me recognize the Universal Brotherhood of Man. Let me love all as my own Self. Salutations unto Thee, O Lord of Compassion.

III

O Omnipresent Lord! Adorations unto Thee. Give me strength to control the mind and to serve Thee and humanity, untiringly, with great zeal and enthusiasm. Make me a fit instrument for Thy work.

O Loving Presence! Remove my weaknesses, defects and evil thoughts. Make

me pure so that I may be able to receive Thy light, grace and blessings.

O Indwelling Presence! Give me a life without disease. Let me remember Thee always. Let me forget the sensual pleasures. Let me have the company of sages and saints. Let me be endowed with dispassion, discrimination and sublime virtues.

O Omniscient Inner Ruler! Prepare me as Thy sweet messenger on this earth so that I may radiate joy, peace and bliss, to the whole world. Let this body, mind and senses, be utilized in Thy service and the service of humanity.

O All-merciful Lord! Let me be conscious of my real divine nature. Let me express my divine nature and divine qualities in my daily actions. Let me become a living presence here.

O Omnipotent Power! Breathe unto me Thy breath of Immortality. Let me drink the divine nectar. Lift me up into the highest realm of supreme peace, eternal bliss and divine splendour. Make me dwell in Thee for ever. Salutations unto Thee, O Lord of compassion!

IV

O Antaryamin, Indweller of our hearts! Friend of the poor, protector of the forsaken, purifier of the fallen (Patitapavana), forgive our sins. Have mercy on us. Show us the smooth way, a royal road for attaining the supreme abode of peace. Open our inner eye of wisdom, the eye of intuition as Thou once didst for Arjuna—Thy friend and devotee. Throw a flood of light in our spiritual path. Bless us and lighten the load of our mundane life in this *Mrityu-loka*.

O Blessed Lord! All-pervading Truth! Divine effulgence! Remove our hard egoism, lust, wrath, greed, pride, arrogance

and Moha (infatuated love for wife, children, property and body or delusion). Cleanse us. Remould us. Make us pure. Give us spiritual strength to attain success in Yoga.

May we surely cross over the ocean of our sin—our terrible enemy—being purified by Thy divine and everlasting grace ! When Thy feet shed their grace on man, he gets rid of all his evils—those blessed feet, the threshold of the (noumenal) world, the ever-luminous, the pure, the brilliant, the ever-shining and effulgent, that profusely pour their choicest showers of ambrosia in diverse ways on the universe; may they strengthen and consolidate our possession of sound knowledge and righteous conduct on earth.

We bow to Thee, O Indweller of our hearts ! Thy teachings constitute the Holy Vedas ; nothing can exist without Thee. The whole universe is Thy body. Thou art the light of knowledge. Thou art the

[supreme Guru, and through Thy grace, may we realize the Truth.

O Lord, the giver of bliss, give us wisdom. Remove all our bad tendencies. Take us under Thy kind shelter so that we may become virtuous. May we all become Brahmacharins and Sadacharins. May we become the protectors of virtue and celibacy.

Salutations to Thee, the Supreme Lord. Thou art the Creator of this universe. Remove the afflictions and miseries of all. Bestow on us the power, courage and strength. Thou art the protector of all beings. Thou art the bestower of peace and bliss. Make everyone happy and cheerful. Thou penetratest all in this universe. Thou cleanseest the minds of all impurities. Let us behold the one Self in all. Grant us peace and immortality. May there be welfare to the whole universe. May all devote themselves in doing good to others. May all evil subside. May the world be happy in all ways !

Religion of Sivananda

I. What is Religion

Religion is a pathway to peace and
Brotherhood.
Religion shows the way to God-realiza-
tion.
Religion is a bond between God and
man.
Religion has the tremendous force of
transforming character.
Religion is better understood when it is
more and more practised.
Without religion there can be no morality
or spirituality.
A life without religion is a dreary waste
and death.
Education without religion is not worth
the name.

II. The One Religion

There is only one religion, the religion
of Love.
There is only one religion, the religion
of the heart.
There is only one religion, the religion
of Vedanta.
There is only one religion, the religion
of unity or oneness.

III. Real Religion

Real religion is above mind and senses.
Real religion is Self-realization.
The essence of religion is divine
experience.
The essence of religion is love and unity.

IV. Unity in Diversity

Brahman, Allah, Krishna, Khuda, Ahur
Mazda,
Jehovah, Shinto, Tao, Buddha, Zoroaster,
Jesus Christ, Mahavir, Confucius—
All are essentially one and the same.
Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti—
Truth is one, sages call it by different
names.

V. Universal Teachings

The universal religious teachings are—
Serve, love, give, purify, meditate, realize ;
Be good, do good, be kind, be com-
passionate;
Enquire " Who am I ?," know the Self,
and be free ;
Love all, serve all, serve the Lord in all ;
Speak the truth, be pure, be humble ;
Concentrate, meditate, attain Self-
realization :

These are the essentials of all religions.
Customs, conventions, ceremonies are
non-essentials.
Do not fight over petty non-essentials.
Prayer, fasting, charity and pilgrimage
Are the first steps in all religions.
Be tolerant, be catholic, have a broad
outlook,
Respect all prophets, all saints, all
messengers :
All saints speak the same language.

VI. Ram or Raheem

Ram or Raheem is the same for me.
Krishna or Kareem is the same for me.
God or Allah has no difference to me.
Ahur Mazda or Jehovah I consider the
same.
I accept and respect all saints and prophets.
I respect all *gurus, pirs* and friars.
I find the underlying truth in all religions.

VII. My Creed

God is my creed.
Cosmic love is my creed.
Selfless service is my creed.
Brotherhood is my creed.
Sacrifice, and renunciation are my creed.
Fellowship and unity are my creed.
Equal vision and equanimity are my creed.
Worship of Truth is my creed.

VIII. Hoist the Flag of Dharma

I have no dogmas and no sectarian creed.
I teach the Way of Life Divine—
The art of Living in a righteous manner.
Beat the drum of Dharma, or the Life Divine.
Hoist the flag of Dharma, or the Life Divine.
Blow the conch of Dharma, or the Life
Divine.
Enter the illimitable domain of Bliss
Eternal.

IX. Religious Ideals

To raise the fallen, to lead the blind,
To share what I have with others,
To bring solace to the afflicted,
To cheer up the suffering,—
Are my religious ideals.
To have perfect faith in God,
To love my neighbours as my own Self,
To love God with all my heart and soul,
To protect animals, women and children,—
Are my religious aims.
My watchword is Love.
The Religion of love
Is my practical Religion.

X. Equal Vision

I sing the name of all saints of all
religions.
I respect all cults, faiths and creeds.
I serve all, love all, mix with all,

Philosophy, beauty, goodness, solitude,
Meditation, Yoga and Vedanta.
Through these religion is revealed.
I am humble and simple.
I am frank and straightforward.
I am perfectly tolerant and catholic.
I am merciful and sympathetic.
I have spontaneous and unrestrained
generosity.
I am bold and cheerful.
I am immensely patient.
I can bear insult and injury.
I am forgiving, and bear no ill-will.
I am free from vindictive nature.
I return good for evil.
I serve with joy the man who has
injured me.
I expect these traits in every religious
aspirant.
He who possesses these qualities
Is a man of religion.

Sivananda's Concept of Religion

INTRODUCTION

Religion is the name given to one's attitude of life, based on the consciousness of the nature of one's relation to God or Over-soul. Religion is also, otherwise, called the attitude of life towards matter and spirit.

God is the deepest truth of the universe, and truth is one. Therefore, the axis of religion is essentially one and the same.

Religion presupposes a fundamental Existence, be it God, Consciousness, or Atman.

The cosmic process of creation and dissolution, through its scenes of appearance and disappearance, in the changing colours of life and death, drives home to mankind the lesson that this life is only an act in the process of *becoming*, where many parts are played by various individual entities, and yet no part by itself is com-

plete and capable of giving the character of wholeness to this cosmic process.

Religion is the means that binds man to the cosmic whole, and shows that he is a part of the whole, trying to abide by the law of the whole, and aiming at the fulfilment of the common purpose of the constituents of the whole.

Self-realization is the ultimate goal of religion; all the rest is only a preparation.

Religion indicates that which has a practical bearing. It is assiduous spiritual practice for evolution. Mere ideological belief without a practical effort is no religion at all.

True, adherence to a particular creed or dogma can also be called practice of religion, but if it does not lead to harmonious

self-development and realization of God, its purpose is fruitless.

Religion is focussed into various practical modes which differ in accordance with the psychological constituents and the traditional and the cultural background of the individual. Yet, religion cannot merely be a set of opinions, dogmas and rituals, but life in the Eternal as its basic perspective. This perspective translated into practice leads one to the attainment of divine consciousness, freeing

one from all limitations and imperfections.

Simple and practical religion is a life of righteousness, goodness, purity and selfless service. The pivot of religion is Truth or the Law of Eternal Virtue. Its precepts are: "Be good. Do good. Be kind. Be pure. Be compassionate. Love all. Serve all. See God in all." Such religion alone can awaken man to the consciousness of the unity of all existence and the realization of the Immanent Spirit, here and now.

WHENCE AND WHERE TO

"What are we? What were we? What shall we be? Were we before our birth? Shall we be after death? What happens to us after death?" This is the eternal question. अस्तित्वेकं नायमस्तित्वेकं (Katho., 1-1-20) It is only a wise man who will try to pursue this question till he comes to a conclusion. It is only he who thrashes out the question till it yields its fruits. The fool will never attempt at a solution or he will abandon the enquiry before reaching a conclusion. Without a knowledge of what we were and what we are going to be, we can't think of a method of putting ourselves where we ought to be, transplant ourselves from where we are to where we should be or we would like to be.

The Upanishads and the Gita give us a clear idea of the answer to our question, नास्त्यो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः The unreal never is. The real never is not. This leads you to the conclusion that the Real (Brahman) exists always. The first quality of Atma is immortality. It is unchangeable. You can never change it. Only the forms of matter change, but the elements of which they are composed can never change. You can break a mud-pot, but the mud, of which the pot was made, is

still there. It is the same fundamental elements that are made to appear as different in diverse forms. These elements are indestructible. The rock is a substance from which the sculptor carves out the image of an idol. You cannot say he has created the image all by himself. It was already there in the rock. The sculptor only removes the extra rock substance and the image is the product. The very word *srishti* has a peculiar meaning in Sanskrit. It comes from the root *visrij*—to project. All that we see around is only a projection of Brahman. You can never create something out of nothing. The Atma has been in existence and will continue to exist after the destruction of the body. All that has happened was behind the screen before birth and it has been brought on the stage of this life. Merely because you don't see the actors behind the screen in a drama, you can't deny their existence. This *srishti* is also like bringing the actors on to the stage from behind the screen.

You do not come into the world in total forgetfulness and in utter darkness. You are born with certain memories and habits acquired in the unknown Past. Desires

take their origin from previous experiences. We find that none is born without desire. Every being is born with some desires, which are associated with the conditions of one's past existence. The desire proves the existence of one's soul in the previous conditions of embodiment.

Again, we never say 'I die,' 'I have died.' When we use this word 'I' the particular one we have in view is the *jivatma*. In dream you see your dead body. You are then a *sakshi*, a detached witness. You are still alive, though you see your own dead body.

Life is the *swabhava* of the 'I.' So the question 'why' is never asked of life. We do not ask "Why is water cold?" We do not ask "Why is the fire hot?" The 'why' is always asked when it is not the *swabhava*—of whatever is unnatural.

All that is unnatural is impermanent and unreal. Your real nature is immortality. You are suffering because you think otherwise and identify yourself with the body. A fish had accidentally jumped out of the water and was struggling. A merciful gentleman took pity on it and carried it home, put it on a warm bed, bathed it, massaged it, in fact provided it with all the comforts he could afford. But it was still struggling. He later threw it back into the water and it instantly began to swim happily. Your case is just like this. You suffer because your lower consciousness has lost the sight of your higher consciousness. You will be happy again as soon as you realize your real nature, the nature of Atman, which is—

अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो

न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे

RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

Religion is not divorced from philosophical wisdom, nor is it alien to the spiritual science of the Self. If the Self is an established fact, and the knowledge of it is true, the way to it also is true and established. This established way is religion.

When religions are founded on non-essentials, on classes, climes, sentiments, idiosyncrasies and the practical needs of a particular society, of a limited part of humanity, they are bound to be cut off from each other. But, when it is known that man is not merely a body, that his ultimate demands are not peculiar to his personality alone, that the essential calls of the inner reality are similar to those in others, too, it will be found that the views of life cannot basically diverge and that, if all aim at a common experience of reality and perfection, their conduct in life can only be a preparation for that Supreme Experience-Whole. This

preparation is the religious life, though it may have many appellations and may pass through the moulds of temperamental peculiarities.

Let it not be thought that religion is a dogmatic, other-worldly, pet tradition of believers or irrational emotionalists. Religion is the most rational science of life itself, which no one can gainsay, the science of man as he essentially is, not merely as he presumes himself to be. Religion is the way to the realization of the highest perfection. If perfection is a possibility, religion is real and it is the only method befitting the human ideal.

Man can never live without God, for God is the Whole and man is only a part. Man's religion puts him in consonance with Truth. Religion is the form taken by the relation that is between man and God, the link between the lower and the higher natures in oneself. Man's own Higher

Nature is God; his essence is the Real; his existence is universal and immortal. Religion is the way spiritual, the way to God. Religious life is spiritual life, a religious man is a spiritual man, for it is not possible to be religious without reverencing the Spirit that is one.

Philosophy has its root in the practical needs of man. Man wants to know about transcendental matters when he is in a reflective mood. There is an urge within him to know about the secret of death, the secret of immortality, the nature of the Soul, of the Creator, and of the world. Philosophy helps him to know all these. Philosophy is the self-expression of the growing spirit of man.

Philosophy is the rational aspect of religion. It is an integral part of religion.

It is a rational inquiry into the nature of Reality. It gives clear solution to get rid of pain and death and attain immortality and eternal bliss.

Religion and philosophy are twin-sisters; the relationship between them is very intimate. Most of the problems of philosophy are the problems of religion. While philosophy struggles to gain an intellectual understanding of the real nature of world, of man and of God, religion dynamically experiences the very Essence of all Existence. Philosophy is man's mental movement towards God or Truth or Reality, and religion is the movement of his heart and soul towards the same goal. Philosophy knows God; religion lives and moves in God. Philosophy is forever searching, inquiring, questioning; religion is sensing, realizing, experiencing.

INADEQUACY OF ATHEISTIC BELIEFS

Religion presupposes belief, faith, conviction. No one can be irreligious in the ultimate analysis. Even the non-believer believes in his non-belief. Even the denier of God accepts the existence of the denier, i.e., himself. The question is, however, whether this type of attitude can meet the needs of the soul, of one's emotions, of the hunger of the spirit. Atheism or the naturalistic religion is a substituting belief. Nature is considered to be all-in-all. She is the mother, and man is the son. Religion, therefore, according to this view, is the relation between unconscious nature and conscious man. Bertrand Russell said that it is a wonder how the mother who is unconscious, i.e., Nature, has produced a son, i.e., man, who is conscious. It is not a wonder; it is a misconception. Because, nature is not unconscious, though we may accept that man is produced by nature. If nature

is unconscious, man also would be unconscious. That means the universe would be blind. There would be no aspiration whatsoever. There would be no attitude of life because there is no consciousness. The naturalistic religion which is synonymous with atheism, because it denies the existence of God altogether, is a very poor substitute for what we mean by real religion. Man cannot get on for ever with this attitude. When the body is healthy, when the circumstances are good, when there is no difficulty whatsoever in life, apparently man with an audacity tries to deny the existence of a supernatural Power. But it is said, that suffering is the basis of religion; it is the precondition of all true knowledge. Unless one comes to the consciousness of certain inadequacy in the conditions of life, unless he finds that something is wanting in his consciousness, in his experience, he will not

reach God. His consciousness would not stretch towards God.

But this kind of aspiration towards the ideal which is not the actual has been denied by another view of life which is called agnosticism. It is the brother of atheism. It is a kind of religion of certain people. They say that truth cannot be known; God cannot be known—He is not and can never be known. There may be God—the agnostic does not deny God, but he says religion is only an ideal which can never be realized. If religion is the relation of man to God, and if God cannot be realized, then religion is phantasm. But, this position of the agnostic is untenable from the very face of it. He says that Truth is not known. He is better than the atheist or the naturalist in this respect at least that he grants that there may be Truth—and there *is* a Truth—but his only contention is that it cannot be known; so, religion is futile. Why is this view untenable? Because it is illogical. When the agnostic accepts that there may be a Truth, he implies in his statement the possibility of knowing the Truth.

We cannot be conscious of a fact which is not contained in our consciousness. That which is outside our consciousness is not ours and we cannot speak about it, cannot think of it, can never have any relation to it. What is Truth? Truth is that which is perfection. It is complete. It is without the difficulties and imperfections and the wants and the inadequate conditions of life. That is Truth. It may not be possible to know it. Does it exist? We do not know. That is the answer of the agnostic. When we are conscious of our finitude, we are at the same time conscious of the existence of an infinitude. We cannot know the existence of a boundary unless we know that there is

something beyond the boundary. We cannot know that we are suffering unless we know that there is a possibility of having another experience which is different from suffering. We cannot know that we are mortal unless there is some state which is immortal. We cannot know that we are men unless we know that there are others like us and different from us. Therefore the implications of agnosticism cannot overstep religion, though from the outside it appears to be a mistake but there are others who say that we need not have such a difficulty at all. Agnosticism may be wrong; but religion is equally wrong. Why? We see that the agnostic is confined to the superfluous experience of life; and, because he does not admit the consciousness of something which exists, he is not correct. We say that the religionist who professes to be conscious of a direct relation between himself and what eternally exists also is equally incorrect. There is an antithesis to every thesis. We can prove anything; and disprove anything—that is the nature of the intellect, because the basis of the intellect is duality, and incomplete knowledge.

This leads to another view of life called scepticism. Everything is doubted. God is doubted; the nature of this world is doubted; experience itself is doubted. Our life ends in doubting! This is another substitute for religion. We do not know what is really right and what is really wrong. With this attitude how long can we live in this world? Evidently, there is one error in this statement of the sceptic. It is a spacious argument. He doubts everything; but he does not doubt his own position. He is confident that what he thinks is true. Though he calls himself a sceptic, he is not sceptic about his own position. He goes beyond scepticism when he asserts that scepticism is the

perfect substitute for religion. If that also is doubted, we will be mad. Truly there is a doubter. He is the basis of religions. He is eternally conscious of himself. That doubter cannot be dispensed

with as an unconscious being, because what is unconscious cannot even doubt. Therefore, scepticism, too, is a feeble and completely unsatisfactory substitute for religion.

EPITOME OF RELIGION

In this world of phenomena, the general rule is that the subtle is veiled or covered over the gross. The truth or the inner essence of anything is hidden by its outward appearance. The *tattwa* is hidden by *nama* and *rupa*. To perceive the inner truth, the underlying essence, you will have to combine observation with discrimination and impartial enquiry. If you fail to do this you will get but a superficial glimpse of things and miss the substance thereof. Religion is no exception to this rule. The real import is not properly understood by a great many. Precisely because of the above-mentioned reason. The sincere inquiry into the true implication of religion is conspicuous by its absence. Thus religion from being rightly understood in its true light as the greatest common factor and universally unifying force in the world, has come to be misunderstood and misconstrued as a disruptive element that is at the bottom of many a quarrel, conflict and warfare, too. Many would readily quote history, remote as well as recent, to support this opinion. The term universality with reference to religion will perhaps evoke a sceptic smile in many. But such scepticism is ridiculous, for, they err in the same way as a man seeing a coloured electric bulb takes the external coloured glass to be the real light and fails to perceive the pure colourless light within.

Universality is the greatest characteristic of true religion. This fact is not

effected by the vote or opinion of the non-discriminating man. When I say true religion I mean religion in its pure essentials and not its conventional conceptions. The reality of religion does not lie in the rituals, external marks or traditional observations, nor in the personal apparel and social customs adopted by the followers of particular aspects of religious life. These are but its ever-changeable surface appearances. But a little reflection and inquiry will reveal to us the unmistakable truth that religion is the root impulse in the heart of every human being. At its basis, religion constitutes the primal spiritual urge to self-awareness. This principle throbs in the heart of all.

Everyone has a positive and a negative side of one's nature which express themselves in the individual's aptitudes and outward behaviour. The process of religion is to enable one to overcome his negative instincts with the help of the hidden positive traits that are present in every human being.

The process of self-culture ensues a growing understanding that one is, in essence, what everything else is, and that everything else is but a repetition, *ad infinitum*, of what one is within oneself. This process unfolds itself first by being truthful, humble, pure, compassionate, dispassionate, forgiving, tolerant, unselfish, generous and charitable. It means leading the divine life which should be free from lust, greed, anger, hatred, jeal-

ousy, pride, egoism, hypocrisy, and all that are negative and base.

Religion is a relation, a conscious relation, between man and his Oversoul. It is this aspiration to know one's own Oversoul that determines the characteristic of religion. If there is one Truth, religion can be one only, though there may be many phases of it. In practical life, however, we can never have one religion. Temperaments of men differ. All people do not think in the same way. Though all are human beings, they think in different ways. They are brought up in different conditions. Their conceptions are different even from birth. Therefore, it will be very difficult to break down the compartmental disposition of religion.

We must develop toleration. That is the thing essential in life. We may know that there is one religion, but with this basis we must develop toleration. We must consider all as brothers. Universal brotherhood may be developed on the basis of universal Selfhood. Unless we accept universal Selfhood, we cannot have universal brotherhood. All social relations should have some supersocial facts as basis; otherwise we can never have happiness.

We must always have a supreme background on which to rest. The ideal never remains an ideal eternally. It can be realized. If an ideal is something which cannot be realized at all, it cannot be contained in our consciousness. The fact that we are able to conceive of perfection shows that there is perfection. The fact that there is some urge in us to become infinite shows that it is possible for us to become infinite. The fact that we fear death shows that we are immortal. The fact that we aspire for unlimited consciousness shows that we can realize unlimited consciousness. This consciousness

can be realized by living the universal religion. This religion is the religion of God, of Truth, which manifests itself in different human beings in different ways. We have got various religions—not merely Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, etc.,—each man has got a religion of his own. Each society has got a view of life which it cherishes. Different sections of life have different forms of religion. But, as parts are united to a whole, all these aspects of religion should be united to a common religion.

Religion is not merely a view, not merely an ideal, not merely a conception, but is the way of right action. It should be permeated by the consciousness of the One God. If you do not like the word 'God' you may use some other. But this fact must be accepted: there is one Reality, Truth, which is immortal, which never dies, which every man should accept if he is sane, because it is impossible to conceive of absolute non-existence, absolute change bereft of this Supreme Reality. It exists, because we exist. The fact that I exist shows that God exists. This is a fact, as the philosopher Descartes said. I have got a consciousness of perfection, infinitude. Wherefrom has that consciousness come to me? It came from Me. I exist. Existence is a fact. Therefore infinitude must exist, and it must be intelligent. With this consciousness we must adjust ourselves, our social life, individual life, national life—on the basis of this infinite consciousness for which we all aspire.

It is the very antithesis of the spirit of religion to look into the faults of other people's religions with a vilifying attitude. It is crudely irresponsible to say: "My religion is perfect; my religion has more intuitive principles; my religion is immensely practical." All these partisan notions

foster discord and misunderstanding. All religions have come from God; every religion is good. That is all you need be dogmatic about. There is no harm in such dogmatism.

The negative traits in the human nature are difficult to eradicate; but ceaseless persevering efforts assure the victory. In the beginning the mind will revolt; the senses will rebel. One has to conquer the negative through continuous attempts at strengthening the positive.

If one wishes to get established in harmlessness, one must be patient; one must go on practising patience, without having to encourage wickedness, or at the cost of disgracing one's basic human dignity. Patience is a glorious virtue; similarly, too, are selflessness, purity, truthfulness, catholicity, generosity and love. One must practise these with commonsense, i.e., speak the truth without having to divulge other people's secrets, be generous without having to deprive one's dependents of their basic needs, be selfless without having to demand the same amount of selflessness from others, love others without having to make oneself cheap or contemptible, practise detachment without being negligent and callous, and cultivate the spirit of renunciation without being irresponsible and irreverent to one's duties.

Ultimately, ethical culture is the criterion of religious progress. One who is not ethically perfect can never be a realized soul. No religious principle that is contrary to ethics is God-given or God-inspired. The creed that instigates proselytization through unfair means or through violence or with political strings attached is the very antithesis to true religion. The religious principle that manipulates on fear-complex is primitive

and undesirable. Lure of heaven and fear of eternal damnation to hell fail to inspire the rational mind. To fear God is quite an undesirable epithet still exhorting by many major religions. One who fears God cannot have genuine devotion or a tender loving attitude towards Him. Some apologists say that the child loves its parents and yet fears their punishment, and so is the case with man and God. True, all children begin with loving their parents, but if the parents believe in punishing their children instead of weaning them away from their mistakes by understanding, protective assurance, and judicious guidance, such children, in their adult life, usually end up in hating their parents. So also is the case with our attitude towards God. If we base our relationship with God on unmixed love and devotion, irrespective of our suffering or temporal happiness, that will be much more enduring.

Love of God is the most fundamental principle of religion. It annihilates all limitations and differentiations. It flows perennially towards the entire creation, even as the sun shines equally upon all. It is a potent remedy to cure the disease of fear and hatred. This pure Love is an irresistible force. To him whose heart is filled with pure love, the voice of his conscience is the voice of God. He engages himself in alleviating the suffering of others. His is an ideal of selfless service. The Lord's will flows through him. He is ever joyful and never afraid. He brings peace and harmony in the lives of all he comes across. The basis of lasting unity of all humanity is the religion of pure love. This is the religion of humanity. This is what religion essentially means to humanity.

Christmas Message (1956)

Prayer is the Answer

Sri Swami Sivananda

O Man! On the eve of the Holy Christmas, kneel down and pray even as the wise men from the East prayed beside the Baby Jesus. That was the greatest Message that Lord Jesus came amongst men to teach. Why have you forgotten so soon?

The breath has been given to you by the Lord, to be spent in prayer. Kneel down and pray: but let the prayer not cease when you rise. Prayer should be lifelong; and your life should be one long prayer.

There are no problems that cannot be dissolved by prayer; no suffering that cannot be allayed by prayer; no difficulties that cannot be surmounted by prayer; and no evil that cannot be overcome by prayer. Prayer is communion with God. Prayer is the miracle by which God's power flows into human veins. Therefore, kneel down and pray.

Greet the dawn of the day, and bid adieu to the setting sun with a prayer of thankfulness: first for a fresh day granted and last for His Grace received. Thus shall your life be blessed and thus will you radiate His Blessings to all around you.

When the storms of war and unrest gather around you, kneel down and pray. Remember the words of Abraham Lincoln, the greatest architect of freedom: "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of all about me, seemed insufficient

for the day." When the wisdom of politicians and social leaders fails, kneel down and pray: for, a pair of praying hands are mightier than rulers of state and winners of battle. At this critical hour in human history, it is prayer alone that can pave the way for peace. Naught else is of any avail.

When, within your bosom rage the storms of lust and anger, vanity and viciousness, kneel down and pray. For, the Lord and He alone hath power over the elements. In thy supplication is thy strength. You will be filled with His Blessings, protected by His Grace, shielded by His Mercy and spurred on the Path of Righteousness by His Divine Will.

Therefore, kneel down and pray. Not, for earthly goods nor for heavenly pleasures. But, for His Grace. "Thy will be done, My Lord! I want nothing," shall be thy prayer. For you know not what is good for you; and you may be asking for trouble and praying for perdition. Pray for Grace. Pray that His Righteousness might descend on the soul of all men. Pray that His Light might illumine the heart of all the leaders of men, and the path of humanity to peace. Kneel down and pray for our Saviour to save the world from its own "misleaders."

May the blessings of Lord Jesus be with you all this Holy Christmas and for ever afterwards. May there be Peace and Goodwill throughout the world! Hail Jesus. Amen.

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Bhagavadgita Jayanti Message

The Gospel of Karma-Yoga

Sri Swami Sivananda

Seekers of Truth,

The Bhagavadgita is the message of the Supreme Sovereign of the universe to all mankind, intended to rouse the slumbering consciousness to the magnificent heights of Divine Splendour and Glory. The trouble of man is in his erroneous notions in regard to his relation to the Supreme Principle that exists as the very vitality and life of all phenomenal beings. The Bhagavadgita voices forth the great truth that second to the Divine Essence there is nothing anywhere to be found (VII, 7). If this is the truth, if the God of humanity is the God of the world, if He is immanent in all things, being at the same time transcendent, then the substance of our existence, the material of our objects of perception, the knowledge that we have of things, should be inseparable from the Ultimate Reality. Man's selfish life then, loses its support, and by forgetting its own inner substance, it cuts the ground from under its own feet.

No person can really afford to lead happily a completely selfish life, for this is contrary to the law of the attainment of permanent happiness. Selfishness, though it is directed to the obtaining of happiness, cannot bring happiness, for it, while seeking happiness, really turns away, from the source of happiness. Human activity is a dramatic display of the struggle of the individual for the acquisition of unceasing happiness, but as this struggle, this endeavour, is shot through with belief in things that perish, faith in the reality of the independence of the human personality, and an implied neglect of the eternal Presence of the Divine in all things, it is doomed to failure. Sri Krishna exhorts

Arjuna to be careful to see that action is rooted in the Yoga of the higher purified understanding, the knowledge that is not heedless towards the recognition of the supremacy of the Absolute over all doers, deeds and results of deeds. The Karma-Yogin bears in mind that experiences of individuals are relative to particularities, and the ultimate worth or value of any experience can be known and realized only in the Universal Consciousness of which all are but parts. The benefits that one enjoys in life are the products of co-operative action on the part of all individuals of the universe, put together, and he who tries to appropriate things for his own individual satisfaction is a veritable thief (III. 12). Man is not estranged from his environment. He is as much influenced by outward circumstances as he contributes to condition them in relation to himself. The individual, the family, the society, the nation and the world are all gradually and progressively arranged fields of the pervasion and activity of consciousness, where it becomes wider and wider until it grasps the whole universe within its comprehension and gets absorbed in the reality of its own Higher Self. Everyone of these stages should become a field for the dynamic practice of Yoga, in different degrees, and every act should become a contemplation of the Divine Being.

The Bhagavadgita as a gospel of Karma-Yoga points out to man the right attitude that he should develop towards actions and things. Anasakti, non-attachment, is the watchword of the Divine Teacher. Vairagya and Abhyasa,—not to be attached to the things of the world, and to be ever in

a state of contemplation of the Eternal in and through life—is the ideal of Karma-Yoga. Act one must; there is no escaping from action. For the very law of empirical life is action. But the dexterity, the Kaushalam, of the Yogi lies in his being able to convert action into Yoga. The great skill in action which Sri Krishna speaks of has its foundation in Samatva or equanimity which is identified with Yoga itself. The individual agent, in this Yoga, regards himself as an instrument in the infinite Hands of the Supreme Lord and works in this world as a pointer on the dial of a watch moves being worked from within by the controlling mechanism, the only special feature in the case of the Karma-Yogin being the maintenance, on his part, of the consciousness of non-attachment and of the all-pervasiveness of the Divine, while the indicator of a watch has no consciousness of the mechanism behind it. Effort has to be transformed into a spontaneous movement of the Universal Consciousness. Then all activity becomes Yoga; even bodily functions, natural actions and vital processes become parts of the universal evolution. The incubus of pain lands itself on the head of the ordinary man of action, because he acts with the false idea that he is sharply cut off from his environment, that he is an isolated individual content of a vast universe which lies outside of him. God, to the common mind, is an ideal possibility, a destination to be reached in the future. But to the enlightened aspirant after perfection, God is an actuality, the sum and substance of all life and meaning, the reality that sustains the

very breath of the universe. Here lies the difficulty in practising Karma-Yoga, that it demands of the Yogin an inner attitude of detachment from dualistic appearances, and a persistent attempt to visualize the One in the many in everyday-life. It is not I that do, but it is the One that does. It is not I that exist, but it is the One that is. The sense of the 'I' vanishes in the practice of the technique of Karma-Yoga. It is a calm, subdued, well thought-out intelligent adjustment of oneself to the general situation of the universe as a whole, without yielding to the tyranny of the senses and the ego, freeing oneself from the tangle of likes and dislikes, greed and anger, that constitutes the pith of the Karma-Yoga that is taught in the Bhagavadgita.

This Yoga is the great need of the hour. There is no forced retirement from action, but there is only a discovery of the truth of action, the deeper significance of human life, a rank neglect of which has resulted in the maladies that are surrounding man from all sides today. Equanimity even in the midst of disturbing activity, Yoga in daily life, is possible when man recognizes that the universe is a living organism, every element of which perforce tends to and does fulfil the unitary law of the organism. The duty of everyone, then, is not to forget this fact of one's being an integral part of this great Organism, which is but the outward manifestation of God Himself, and to work in loyalty to it, to the best of one's knowledge and ability. The prosperity of the world is thus ensured by the Bhagavadgita way of life.

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Ashram News and Notes

Eighth Eye Relief Camp

The Eighth Eye Relief Camp (the second one in the current year) was held under the auspices of the Sivananda Charitable Hospital, at Sivanandanagar, during the third and the fourth week of November. Whilst the Eye Department of the Hospital is already looking after the cases it is specially intended to treat—including by means of surgery—a special Camp was opened by Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj on 20th November, on the arrival of Dr. B.G. Adhwaryoo, M.B.B.S., D.O., of Virnagar, Bombay, who has established for himself a remarkable reputation in highly efficient eye surgery, as also for his great humanitarian services by way of holding Eye Camps at various places to bring relief to poor patients. During the four-day stay of Dr. Adhwaryoo at the Ashram, about 210 patients availed of his services, thirty-one of whom were treated surgically. This included removal of cataract, iridectomy, pterigium, etc. Though the Camp was mainly intended to treat eye cases, patients suffering from general diseases were also given special medical advice and treatment. Five of these underwent surgery (hernia operation 4, and fistula 1).

Among those who assisted in conducting the Camp were Dr. Lakshmi Mirchandani, M.B.B.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., who also attended on the women patients other than those treated in the Eye Camp; six members of Dr. Adhwaryoo's party; Dr. Swami Hridayananda, M.B.B.S., D.O., in-charge of the Eye Department; and the entire staff of the Hospital, besides other *sadhaks* of the Ashram.

Discourses and Music Performances

On 16th November, at the Ashram's evening *satsanga*, Prof. P. Sambamoorthy,

head of the department of music in the University of Madras, gave a performance of the *karnatak* style of music on a bamboo violin (a Philippino string instrument capable of conveying remarkably identical notes as that of the conventional type of violin), following which he gave a learned discourse on a comparative analogy of the systems of music in the East and the West.

Earlier, on 1st November, Sri M.S. Lakshmi, a radio-artiste from Madras, and her tutor Sri Yajna Narayana, gave a performance of various *karnatak ragas*. On 3rd November, Sri R.C. Raut, of New Delhi, gave a dance recital after the *manipuri* style, and sang a few pieces of Oriya folk-songs.

A series of discourses on the philosophy and teachings of the Bhagavadgita were given under the auspices of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University by Upanyasakesari Sri S.V. Subrahmanya Sastri, of Muthurasanellur (District Tiruchi), during the last week of the month under review.

Celebrations

The Ashram celebrated the six-day worship of Sri Skanda or Kartikeya, commencing from 3rd and concluding on 8th November. The programme included special prayer services, study of the *Skanda Purana*, collective *japa* of *Om Saravanabhavayanamah*, and *kirtan* and *bhajan* in adoration of the Deity.

Y.-V.F.U. Press

An automatic, power-driven folding machine was installed in the binding section of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University Press, on 16th November.

Obituary

News had reached of the *mahasamadhi* of Sri Narayanswamiji Maharaj, of Almorah

district, who was so well-known for his great humanitarian and educational services in the interior parts of the Himalayas in the Kumaon Division. He was a famous *sankirtanist* and a great *bhakta*. He was also the founder of a degree college near Askot (the Bapu Mahavidyalaya) and had also helped numerous educational institutions in the area, financially. His Ashram near Soosa, on the Indo-Tibetan border gave shelter to the mendicant-pilgrims to Kailasa-Manasarowar region in Tibet and provided all necessary help to them. While offering a prayer for the departed soul of Sri Narayanswamiji Maharaj, Sri Swami Sivandaji Maharaj observed: "His loss is a great loss to the *sankirtan* world.....He was a very generous and magnanimous soul..... He always used to do ecstatic *kirtan* and sometimes enter into *bhava-samadhi*." Sri Narayanswamiji Maharaj passed away on 9th November, in Calcutta, after a heart-attack.

Students' Parties and Other Visitors

As during the preceding months, a number of students parties visited the Ashram during the month of November. To every group of the young visitors Sri Swamiji Maharaj paid his characteristically special attention—leading them in singing the Lord's name and instructing them on the fundamentals of ethical discipline. To the groups of elder students he spoke on metaphysics, spiritual values of life, and gave appropriate answers to their questions. During the period under review Sri Swamiji Maharaj received:

3rd November: A batch of 30 scouts and cubs of Hari Kirtan Prem Mandali,

Dehra Dun;

8th: 17 students and three teachers of H.V. Shroff Memorial High School, Baroda;

9th: About 40 students and instructors of the Engineering College, Jodhpur;

10th: About 35 students and professors of the Primary Training College for Women, Baroda;

11th: About 30 probationers of the Excise Cadre; and

18th: About 70 students and five teachers of Gandhi Vidyalaya, Gulabpura, Rajasthan.

The following were among the other visitors to the Ashram:

Sri Ashok Kumar Chanda, Comptroller and Auditor-General of India; Sri Khosla, Vice-Chancellor of the Roorkee Engineering University; Sri Y.N. Sukthankar, I.C.S., Cabinet Secretary to the Government of India; Dr. C.H. Yeang, Penang; Dr. (Mrs.) Muthulakshmi Reddy, founder of the Avvai Home, Madras; Swami Ramanand Tirth, former President of the former Hyderabad State Congress; Sri Paul S. Welty, U.S. delegate to the UNESCO General Conference held recently in New Delhi; Sri Coeytause (France), Sri Baldoon Dhingra (India) and Mrs. Dixon (U.K.), of the UNESCO Headquarters, Paris; Mrs. Feroza Taleyarkhan, of the Ramanashram, Tiruvannamalai; Sri C. Sentinella, of Brisbane, Australia; Dr. Hetram Agarwal, M.D., Amritsar; Brigadier B.N. Batra, Simla; Lt.-Col. Rikhye, Roorkee; Sri Pannalal, Amritsar; seven delegates to the UNESCO General Conference; and nine Buddhist monks from Thailand, among them Bhikkhu Ong Sutabothbovorn and Bhikkhu Dhamma Vivek.

PLEASE NOTE

At the instance of some of our American well-wishers, we are once again constrained to state that Dr. Kailash Nath Gupta, who is at present staying in the U.S.A., has no connection whatsoever with the Divine Life Society, or the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University, or with any of the activities sponsored or conducted by Sri Swami Sivandaji Maharaj. He is not authorised to represent Sri Swamiji Maharaj or any section of his mission, in any capacity.

—Secretary, Divine Life Society, P.O. Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh, U.P.

Branch Reports From Abroad

SIVANANDA SCHOOL OF YOGA AND VEDANTA IN CANADA

As announced earlier, the Sivananda School of Yoga and Vedanta is continuing its commendable activities towards the propagation of the ancient spiritual culture of India in the Dominion of Canada under the able leadership of Swami Sivananda-Radha who had specially come to the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University, at Sivanandanagar, about a year ago to undergo a preparatory training for six months. The purpose of this institution in Canada, which is affiliated with the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University, is the awakening of the higher spiritual consciousness in the individual and the integral development of one's personality through physical, mental and spiritual culture. Besides, the institution also provides an opportunity to everyone to study, understand, and practise different religious philosophies, so as to promote mutual goodwill, concord and harmony.

The Sivananda School of Yoga and Vedanta has its centres in 2557, Bellevue, Avenue, West Vancouver, B.C.; 200 Galley Avenue, Toronto 3, Ont.; and Place d'Armes Station, Montreal 1, P.Q. Swami Sivananda-Radha, who has recently concluded a Yoga dissemination tour in Western Canada, had earlier appeared in television from Montreal, given a number of discourses on general outlines of Yoga, as also about her stay in India at Sivanandanagar, screened films on the "Life and Activities in the Monastery of Swami Sivananda," and given demonstrations of Yoga exercises at various places in Eastern Canada. Her programme in Western Canada included weekly Hatha Yoga and meditation classes, projection of films taken by her while at Sivanandanagar, discourses on Yoga and religion, interviews to radio reporters, a dance recital after the *Bharatanaty* style, etc., most of which had been organized in the cities of Vancouver and Toronto.

Another Yoga Centre in Councillors Street, Montreal

Meanwhile, excellent work in the spiritual field is being continued by Sri Sivananda-Sushila at 2000, City Councillor Street, Montreal 2, P.Q., who is holding regular classes on Hatha Yoga exercises, meditation, study of the works of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, prayer and *kirtan*. Sri Sivananda-Sushila (Miss Sylvia Heck) had also been to Sivanandanagar about a year ago where she stayed for six months and learnt Yoga exercises.

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY, SPRINGFIELD, DURBAN

The Divine Life Society of Springfield, Durban, which was officially opened in December last year, is making steady progress in its lofty mission of spreading the gospel of Divine Life in South Africa. Regular prayer services are being held at the Springfield Hindu Sabha School (Alpine Road) which include a special children's prayer service every Saturday, a combined service for adults and children every Sunday, and a meditation and Yoga exercises class every Thursday.

Important celebrations connected with Hindu theology are held from time to time, the Guru Purnima, Krishna Janmashtami, Deepavali and other festivals among them. The Branch also celebrated Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj's 70th birthday on a grand scale on the 8th September. While the main services are held at the above place, individual devotees also take turn in holding prayer meetings of the branch in their respective residences. On important occasions appropriate discourses are given by distinguished persons under the auspices of the Springfield Branch which has been so well functioning during the current year—in co-operation with the other centres of the Divine Life Society in Durban—as to elicit keen appreciation of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj.

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FACSIMILE LETTERS

Of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj to different spiritual aspirants on the first of the month, are printed on the second cover of every issue.

NARAYANA ASHTAKSHARI MAHAMANTRA KOTI JAPA YAJNA

Under the auspices of the Gita Prema Samaj, of Tuni (East Godavari District), Sri Devata Ranganatha Rao proposes to conduct a *Narayana Ashtakshari Mahamantra Koti Japa Yajna* according to the *sastrie* injunctions of the *Pancharaatra Agama*. The *Yajna* will commence on 9th February and conclude on the 27th March, 1957. The *mantra* of *Om Namo Narayanaya* will be chanted for ten million times and offered as an *ahuti* invoking peace and welfare for the entire humanity. This will be followed by feeding of the *daridranarayan*as.

For every *anna* that any individual may contribute towards the defrayal of the expenses for holding this *yajna*, the holy *mantra* will be chanted once and offered on his or her behalf together with *tarpana*, etc. Accordingly, in his or her name, a *mantra-avahana* will be done in the *mahamantra-pitha*. All devotees are requested to contribute their mite for the success of the *yajna* to the organizer :

—Sri Devata Ranganatha Rao, President, Gita Prema Samaj,
Tuni, East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

1. Subscribers to *The Divine Life*, whose subscription to the journal expires by the end of this year, are requested to send their renewal fee for the next year (or years) at the earliest. The January 1957 issue of *The Divine Life* will be sent only to such of those who have renewed their subscription for the next year within the second week of this month. While sending renewal subscription, subscribers may please quote their current subscription number.

2. It is possible that there may be some duplication of addresses in our mailing list, particularly those of the donors and important associates of the Divine Life Society to whom *The Divine Life* is sent without a formal receipt of subscription. We, therefore, request all those receiving more than one copy of the journal to inform us immediately (quoting the dispatch numbers) so that the duplicate copies may be utilized otherwise.

3. Name and full address should always be written in block letters while addressing any communication to us.

4. We request all members of the Divine Life Society to renew their membership for the next year (or years) within the second week of this month so as to ensure the receipt of the January 1957 number of *Wisdom Light*.

5. The Branches of the Divine Life Society in India and abroad may also renew their affiliation with the Headquarters for the next year at the earliest.

Subscribers to the other periodicals issued from Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh, whose subscriptions to them expire by the end of this year, may also renew them for the next year within the second week of this month.

The Secretary, Divine Life Society, P.O. Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh, U.P.

PATHWAYS TO SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

Any aspirant who wishes to lead the Divine Life of truthfulness, non-violence, self-restraint and purity can become a member of the Divine Life Society, irrespective of caste, nationality or religion, on payment of an annual membership fee of Rs. 2 which is to cover the subscription to *Wisdom Light*. An admission fee of Rs. 5 is initially charged to provide the new members with a publication of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, some spiritual tracts, and self-culture diary and resolve-forms, and a rosary.

Any group of individuals, wishing to practise and spread the basic fundamentals of spiritual culture and to do some selfless, humanitarian service can open branches of the Society, including Ladies' and Students' sections, on consultation with the headquarters. The branches of the Divine Life Society are required to pay to the headquarters an annual affiliation fee of Rs. 12, which meets the subscriptions to *The Divine Life*, *Wisdom Light* and *The Branch Gazette*.

Besides *The Divine Life* (Rs. 3/- per annum) the monthly periodicals issued by the D.L. Society are: *Health and Long Life* (3/12), *Wisdom Light* (2/-), *Branch Gazette* (2/-) and *Yoga-Vedanta* (Hindi) (3/12). In addition to these, the official journal of the Yoga-Vedanta Forest University, *The Yoga Vedanta Forest University Weekly* (6/3), is issued from here every week.

The Secretary, Divine Life Society, P.O. Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh, U.P.

THIRTY-FIFTH ALL-INDIA YOGA-VEDANTA CONFERENCE

The 35th All-India Yoga-Vedanta Conference and the 35th Divine Life Sadhana Weekend will be held at Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh, from 28th to 31st December 1956. Disciples and devotees of Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj, members and associates of the Divine Life Society, representatives of religious institutions, and all spiritual seekers in general are cordially invited to participate in the programme given below, after having informed us of their acceptance of the invitation. Though no lodging and boarding charges are required to be paid by the visiting participants, voluntary donations will be thankfully accepted towards the defrayal of the expenses incurred for holding the Sadhana Weekend. Visitors are requested to bring with them necessary warm clothings for their use.

Common Features On All Days

- 5-30 a.m. to 6-30 a.m. Group meditation, *japa*, chorus recitation of *shanti mantras*, and other prayers.
- 6-30 a.m. to 7-30 a.m. Performance of *yoga* exercises (including *asana*, *pranayama*, *suryanamaskara*, etc.).
- 7-00 p.m. to 10 p.m. *Satsanga* : Discourses, on general, spiritual and allied topics and devotional music, including *sankirtan* and *bhajan*.

28th December

- 7-30 a.m. to 8-00 a.m. *Prabhat-pheri*.
- 9-30 a.m. to 11-30 a.m. Recitations from the Bhagavadgita; discourses on the philosophy and teachings of the Bhagavadgita.
- 3-00 p.m. to 3-30 p.m. Mantra-writing.
- 3-30 p.m. to 5-30 p.m. Discourses on the spiritual ideal of life and the path of *sadhana*.

29th December

- 9-30 a.m. to 11-30 a.m. Discourses on Raja Yoga and its eight major branches.
- 3-00 p.m. to 3-30 p.m. Mantra-writing competition.
- 3-30 p.m. to 5-30 p.m. 23rd session of the All-World Religions Federation; discourses on the common bases of religious beliefs, and the application of such ideals for individual and social well-being.

30th December

- 9-30 a.m. to 10-30 a.m. Discourses on Karma Yoga or the path of selfless service.
- 10-30 a.m. to 11-30 a.m. 18th session of the All-World Sadhus Federation.
- 3-00 p.m. to 3-45 p.m. Review of the "Sivananda Regalia."
- 4-00 p.m. to 5-30 p.m. Discourses on Bhakti Yoga or the path of devotion.

31st December

- 9-30 a.m. to 12 noon Maha Puja at the Viswanath Mandir; Havan for commonweal and world peace; 13th foundation anniversary celebration of the Temple.
- 12 noon to 2 p.m. Feeding of *mahatmas* and the *daridranarayanas*.
- 4-00 p.m. to 5-30 p.m. Discourses on Jnana Yoga or the path of Vedanta.

N.B.—The programme is subject to modification to suit the convenience of the visiting aspirants.

The Secretary, Divine Life Society, P.O. Sivanandanagar, Rishikesh, U.P.